

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-08
CIEP-01 FAA-00 /061 W
-----231228 010743 /14

O 231130Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4237
INFO AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 0387

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EAIR, GY
SUBJECT: PROBLEM IN REFUELING CUBAN VICE PRESIDENTIAL AIRCRAFT

REF: HEAVNER/BLACKEN TELCON FEB 22

1. MINISTER OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES HUBERT JACK CALLED ME THIS EVENING (FEB 22) TO INFORM ME OF A PROBLEM WHICH HE SAID HAD SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS. TEXACO WAS REFUSING TO REFUEL THE CUBANA AIRLINER WHICH HAD BROUGHT CUBAN VICE PRESIDENT JUAN ALMEIDA BOSQUE TO GUYANA TO ATTEND REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATIONS. TEXACO IS THE ONLY FIRM IN GUYANA THAT SUPPLIES FUEL FOR JET AIRPLANES. HE SAID TEXACO'S REFUSAL AND HENCE GUYANA'S INABILITY TO PROVIDE NORMAL SERVICING AND REFUELING FOR THE CUBAN PLANE WAS A SERIOUS EMBARRASSMENT FOR GUYANA. THE PLANE IS SCHEDULED TO LEAVE FEBRUARY 26.

2. JACK SAID THIS MATTER WAS UNDER DISCUSSION IN CABINET MEETING AND ACTING PRIME MINISTER REID HAD DIRECTED HIM TO CALL ME TO INQUIRE WHETHER THE USG COULD HELP IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM. HE SAW TWO INDICATIONS THAT THE USG MIGHT HELP. FIRST, THERE WERE SIGNS THAT IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE THE US MIGHT WANT TO DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA. SECOND, THE US AND

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GUYANA WERE ATTEMPTING TO IMPROVE RELATIONS, AND USG HELP ON THIS MATTER WOULD SAVE GUYANA EMBARRASSMENT AND WOULD BE CONSIDERED A SIGNIFICANT GESTURE OF GOOD WILL.

3. TEXACO, JACK SAID, WAS A US FIRM AND, IN GENERAL, HAD PROVIDED SATISFACTORY SERVICE TO GUYANA. BUT IF THE FIRM PER-
SISTED IN REFUSING TO PROVIDE SERVICE TO THE CUBANA AIRLINER,

GUYANA WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ACT AGAINST THE FIRM. HE DID NOT SPECIFY WHAT ACTION THE GOG WOULD TAKE, BUT INDICATED THAT THE PROBLEM, IF UNSOLVED, COULD NOT BUT ADVERSELY AFFECT US-GUYANA RELATIONS. I REPLIED THAT I WOULD LOOK INTO THE MATTER.

4. I CALLED THE LOCAL TEXACO MANAGER, MR. D'ABREU, WHO CONFIRMED THAT TEXACO'S POLICY, ESTABLISHED IN ITS NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS, WAS NOT TO REFUEL CUBANA AIRCRAFT. THIS POLICY HAD BEEN ADOPTED AFTER CASTRO SEIZED TEXACO'S ASSETS IN CUBA. REGULAR CUBANA COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS NORMALLY WAIT UNTIL THEY LAND IN PORT-OF-SPAIN FOR REFUELING BY SHELL. IN THIS INSTANCE, THE AIRCRAFT HAD NO REASON FOR STOPPING IN PORT OF SPAIN--UNLESS FOR REFUELING. D'ABREU WAS OF THE OPINION THAT IF TEXACO DOES NOT PROVIDE THE SERVICE, ITS DAYS OF OPERATION IN GUYANA WOULD SOON BE FINISHED. HE SAID HE WOULD RECOMMEND TO HIS SUPERIORS IN TEXACO'S PORT OF SPAIN OFFICE THAT THE SERVICE BE PROVIDED.

5. COMMENT: THIS IS A "NATIONAL DIGNITY" PROBLEM FOR GUYANA. THEIR INABILITY TO PROVIDE SERVICE FOR AN IMPORTANT SOCIALIST VISITOR TO THEIR REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION BECAUSE THEY ARE DEPENDENT UPON A UNITED STATES BASED MULTI-NATIONAL FIRM WOULD BE A SEVERE HUMILIATION FOR THEM VIS-A-VIS CUBA AND OTHERS. PERHAPS WORSE, IT WOULD BE READY-MADE ISSUE FOR OPPOSITION LEADER CHEDDI JAGAN TO EXPLOIT. GUYANESE LEADERS, EVEN IF ONLY TO PROVE THEIR "INDEPENDENCE" TO THEMSELVES, WOULD BE UNDER SEVERE PRESSURES TO FORCE TEXACO OUT OF BUSINESS HERE. ON THIS KIND OF ISSUE, THEY WOULD PLACE NATIONAL DIGNITY ABOVE ANY ECONOMIC INTERESTS INVOLVED.

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6. THE EFFORTS OF WILLS AND OTHERS TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT HERE WHICH COULD LEAD TO RECONCILIATION WITH THE US, ARE ENCOUNTERING SKEPTICISM AMONG PARTY RADICALS. THE TEMPER THAT WOULD BE LOOSED IN THIS MATTER WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY SET BACK THAT PROCESS AGAIN. WE COULD ARGUE CORRECTLY THAT IT IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT FOR GUYANA TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US THAN IT IS FOR THE US, THEREFORE, THE US SHOULD NOT BOTHER. THE PROBLEM HERE IS THAT, WITHOUT THE COLLABORATION OF THE USG, THOSE HERE WHO WOULD WORK TOWARD BETTER US-GUYANA RELATIONS CANNOT SUCEED. INCIDENTS, SUCH AS THIS REFUELING PROBLEM AND PREVIOUS CRISES KEEP UPSETTING THEIR EFFORTS AND GIVING THE RADICALS DOMINANCE.

7. I RECOGNIZE THAT US LEGISLATION MAY PROHIBIT SALES BY US FIRMS TO CUBA. THE GUYANESE, HOWEVER, WOULD INTERPRET DENIAL OF SERVICE TO THE CUBAN PLANE AS A POLICY DECISION OF TEXACO AND/OR THE USG RATHER THAN AS A LEGAL PROBLEM. IN MY VIEW TEXACO'S INTERESTS IN GUYANA AND THE INCENTIVE OF THE

GOG TO CONTINUE TO WORK TO IMPROVE US-GUYANESE RELATIONS WOULD BE
ADVANCED BY A DECISION BY TEXACO TO PROVIDE THE SERVICE REQUESTED IN
THIS INSTANCE.

7. I REQUEST GUIDANCE CONCERNING A RESPONSE TO THE GOG.
BLACKEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUELING, AIRCRAFT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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